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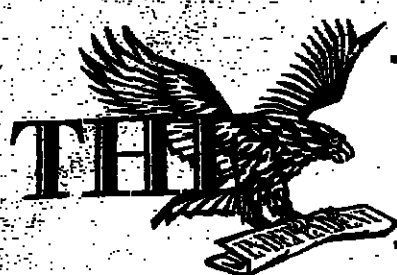
OUR SCORCHED EARTH

Part one of a three-part series on how global warming will change your life
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RORY WHO?

Britain's most gifted Mimic interviewed
Weekend, page 3



THE INDEPENDENT

SATURDAY 30 MARCH 1996

50p

New deal will fund care of elderly

Major pledge of state cash to ease hardship

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

A pre-election initiative of a "pound-for-pound" deal with the private sector to promote the widespread use of individual insurance for long term care of the elderly is being planned by the Government.

John Major is expected today to give the strongest public indication yet that he favours policy under which the state will match long term provision provided by insurance companies to prevent the elderly in long term care losing their assets, including family homes.

The Prime Minister is likely to confirm in his keynote speech to the Conservative Central Council in Harrogate that the Government will produce a White Paper after Easter laying out detailed options for what all parties acknowledge is the serious problem of tackling the spiralling costs of the elderly in residential care.

He is preparing to treat the commitment to tackling the issue as a key section of the party's goal of making Britain a "Nation of Opportunity and Ownership", one of five themes the party will continue to emphasise during the campaign and the general election.

Late drafts of Mr Major's speech, which will be finalised this morning as he returns from the opening of the Inter-Governmental Conference in Turin, include a pointed reference to long term care which will underline the Government's commitment to tackling the issue. Although the final details could await the manifesto, the Government may produce them well before then.

At present the state only meets the full costs of nursing home care if the individual's assets are worth less than £10,000. This means that the family home frequently has to be sold, and the life savings massively depleted, to ensure state provision. Ministers have already de-

cided in principle - as disclosed by the Independent - in favour of a scheme which would allow the elderly to keep their assets to the value of the private insurance cover which they had secured.

In other words, if a person gets £60,000 in insurance provision for residential nursing home care over three years, the government would allow them to keep £60,000 - instead of the current £10,000 - of their assets or savings, even though the state is paying for the rest of their provision.

At present the insurance industry calculates that such a level of provision could be provided with a lump sum premium, paid on retirement, of around £9,000.

The issue is highlighted in "Our Nation's Future", the document published this week on the findings of the most comprehensive consultation exercise carried out among the party's rank and file membership - and describing provision of long term care as a "matter of major concern to Conservatives".

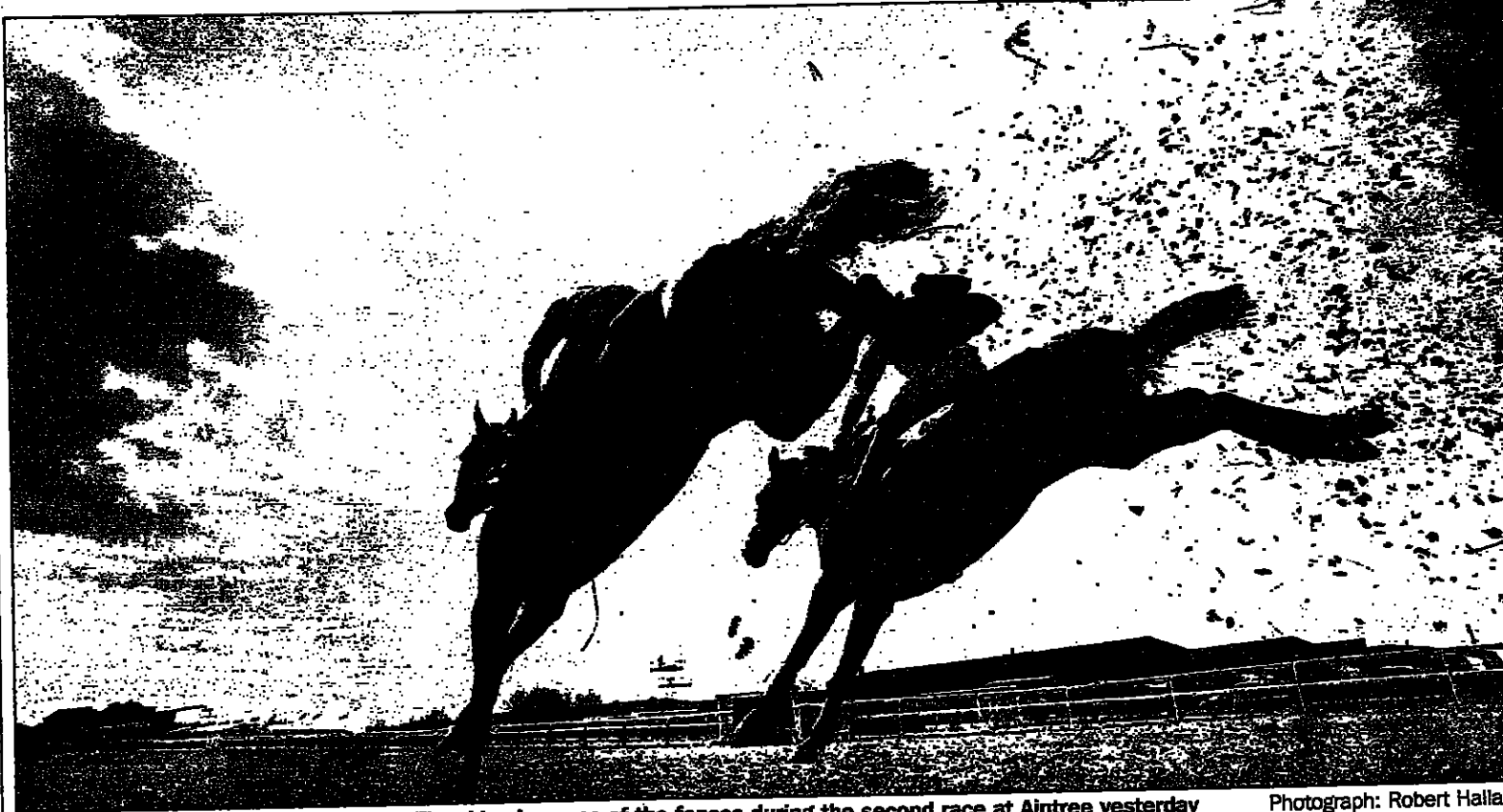
Mr Major's emphasis on long term care will come in a wide-ranging speech setting out an electoral platform which will emphasise his determination to encourage an increase in academically selective schools.

Basing his speech on the five electoral themes - Opportunity and Ownership, Law and Order, Enterprise and Prosperity, Sovereign Nation, and First Class Public Services - Mr Major will also go out of his way to draw the line between Labour's view of Europe and support for devolution with the Tory view of Britain as a distinct and united nation state.

Yesterday the Cabinet's big guns, Kenneth Clarke and Michael Heseltine, were wheeled out at the central council to emphasise the Tories' unifying concept of Britain as the "Enterprise Centre of Europe".

Harrogate reports, page 2

Grand National alert for Aintree's big day



Racing home: Coulton (left) and Viking Flagship clear one of the fences during the second race at Aintree yesterday

Photograph: Robert Hallam

RICHARD EDMONDSON
Racing Correspondent

There will be worried faces at Aintree this afternoon, not all of them belonging to jockeys who face the ultimate racing challenge of the Grand National.

In the wake of the Cheltenham Festival earlier this month, when 10 horses met their deaths, security has been

stepped up for the race some portray as the greatest killing field of them all.

Officers have been on 24-hour alert since Monday, patrolling the grounds and searching prominent locations on the course. More than 400 members of security will be on duty this afternoon, employing a closed-circuit television system.

There have been threats to disrupt today's events from animal rights protesters

and a milder message from the League Against Cruel Sports. "Events such as the Grand National are far too gruelling for the animals involved," Kevin Saunders, a spokesman, said yesterday. "We call on the racing authorities and the general public to recognise that it is unacceptable to ask any horse to forfeit its life in the name of sport."

With betting tax now down to 9 per

cent, bookmakers expect turnover to hold its own. The National is Britain's most popular sporting betting event. Betting shops are expected to handle more than £100m from 15 million people. Only 28 runners are likely to line up this afternoon. Last night Ladbrokes had four joint-favourites on 7-1, in Rough Quest, Son Of War, Superior Finish and Young Hustler.

Europe may lift ban on British beef on Monday

SARAH HELM
and JOJO MOYES

The possibility that the European ban on British beef could be lifted as early as Monday was signalled yesterday at the meeting of European leaders in Turin.

Amid resounding declarations of solidarity with Britain, the European heads of government held out the hope that the ban could be lifted as soon as a new British package of BSE-eradication measures is agreed by the European Commission. It now seems likely that such a package will be ready for discussion by an emergency meeting of European agriculture ministers in Brussels on Monday.

Britain's hope is that European veterinary scientists would then make a speedy recommendation to the Commission



Major: Restoring confidence

to end the ban. "As soon as we have agreed the package we will be able to restore confidence. That confidence will be sufficient to lift the ban placed on British beef," said Mr Major.

Britain's European partners also pledged yesterday to give substantial financial assistance to the British beef industry, once

that package is approved. Jacques Santer, the Commission president said: "The community must play its role. We have shown our solidarity with the UK to combat this and to restore confidence in the market."

Jacques Chirac, the French President, said European leaders had shown "one hundred per cent solidarity with Britain". British officials were in Brussels yesterday hammering out a programme for the phased slaughter of cattle, and a deal on Commission compensation. No figures were given but John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, said the programme being proposed by Britain would be "more dramatic" than measures in place so far.

Lamberto Dini, the Italian Prime Minister and president of the European Council, said the possibility of lifting the ban would be a "first priority" for

the agriculture ministers on Monday.

Speaking as if the beef crisis was past its worst, Mr Major repeated his criticism of the European export ban, and spoke of the "collective hysteria" which it had helped fuel in Britain and across the continent. "Everybody realised that panic merely breeds more panic," he said. The crisis had left "deep scars", said the Prime Minister. While the government remained adamant that the scientific evidence proved that British beef was safe, there were "lessons to be learned" about how to prevent hysteria in beef scares of the future which could happen anywhere in Europe.

Meanwhile, the lack of consumer confidence in British beef continued to manifest itself in stores across the country yesterday.

IN BRIEF

Bound to confuse
The law on public acts of sadomasochism was thrown into confusion after the manager of the "Whiplash" nightclub was cleared of keeping a disorderly house. Page 3

Aids hunt
Doctors at a London hospital are monitoring 40 people in a search for someone immune to the Aids virus. Page 4

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ROBERT FISK

The Independent's Middle East Correspondent, was named Foreign Reporter of the Year in this week's British Press Awards

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Prison chief wrongly sacked, says Howard

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

In a continuing climbdown, Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, admitted he wrongly sacked Derek Lewis, the former head of the prison service, and will now pay up to £200,000 in compensation.

An agreement reached by the High Court yesterday in favour of the former prison chief, who has always claimed he was made the scapegoat for the embarrassing escapes of three dangerous men from Parkhurst prison on the Isle of Wight - only weeks after IRA terrorists had fled another top security prison.

The settlement, in what has been a personal and acrimonious battle between the two men, re-opens the thorny question about whether ministers

who decide prison policy, or civil servants, responsible for day to day operations, were to blame for the failures that led to the debacle.

Mr Lewis, who, from the moment he was dismissed last October made it clear he would not go quietly, immediately accused Mr Howard of wasting taxpayers' money. He said: "The attempt to distinguish between policy and operations was no more than a political sleight-of-hand - such a small figleaf that it was grossly indecent."

The former prison chief has issued his writ in the middle of a political storm over the running of the country's jails, claiming 12 occasions when Mr Howard intervened in operational duties - including the question of Private Lee Clegg being held following a right-wing press campaign to free

him. Those close to Mr Lewis claimed that if his action ever reached court it would damage Mr Howard even more.

Mr Lewis will now receive a year's salary of £125,000 but will fight for bonus and pension contributions worth £75,000.

"These legal proceedings should not have been necessary," he said. "This has been an open-and-shut case from the beginning and yet I have received no explanation for my dismissal or any apology."

Adding to Mr Howard's embarrassment yesterday was the news that he has still not been able to find a successor for the man he sacked. Headhunters have told the Home Office the task of finding suitable candidates to head the country's troubled jail system has been hampered by the treatment of Mr Lewis.

Weapons that don't kill? Tell it to the marines

CHRIS BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

The US Marines, who have battled their way around the world with bayonet bullets and true grit, are preparing to defend the free world with the latest in weapons technology - sponges, glue, sticky foam, bean bags and a rather nasty noise.

These "non-lethal weapons" have long been regarded by military experts as virtually useless, but with the Pentagon deciding to increase its spending on them by \$5.2m to \$37.2m this year, the Marines will work with the other armed services and agencies such as the CIA to make equipment including the "12-gauge bean bag" and the "40mm foam rubber baton" a force to be reckoned with.

The Marine Corps, which fought long and hard for the honour of being chosen to expand "non-lethal warfare", believes that the weapons will be of great value, particularly in peacekeeping operations such as those in Bosnia and Somalia where minimum force has to be used to try to avoid alienating the local population.

And instead of practising their blood-curdling war cries the Marines will be instructed in the use of "bio-acoustic" weapons that cause a "digestive reaction" - in other words, they will be taught how to use machines that make low-frequency sounds which make people feel sick. It is not expected that the Marines will change their training chant from "I love my rifle" to "I love my bean bag".

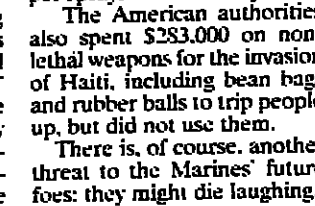
The United States has already spent \$126,000 on a variety of non-lethal weapons which were to be used in So-

malia, including a machine that lays down a wall of bubbles laced with tear gas and a cannon that fires a glue-soaked net designed to trap crowds of people. However, only sticky foam which made it difficult for rioters to move forward and pepper sprays were actually used.

The American authorities also spent \$283,000 on non-lethal weapons for the invasion of Haiti, including bean bags and rubber balls to trip people up, but did not use them.

There is, of course, another threat to the Marines' future foes: they might die laughing.

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IN BRIEF

can return to work
A psychiatric nurse convicted of rape 10 years ago and banned from practising has been told he can return to his profession, it has emerged. It is the second time in less than 12 months that a nurse struck off for rape has been re-instated.

The professional body for nursing, which last year promised a to re-examine procedures in the wake of the cases, is to carry out an urgent review after this week's ruling in the case of Yuen How Choy, 50. It claims there are no rules barring the restoration to the register of any nurse struck off following a crime. Choy served half of a two year prison sentence for rape in 1986. He was struck off from the United Kingdom Central Council for nurses in the same year.

Asian police chief
Britain's first Asian assistant chief constable was appointed yesterday - to work with the police force's highest ranking woman, Mohammed Tarique Ghaffar, 40, was one of two assistant chief constables appointed to the Lancashire force, headed by Britain's first woman chief constable, Pauline Clare.

Man held in siege
Armed police surrounded a house in Glasgow last night where three post office raiders were holding hostage a 67-year-old man with a heart condition. Earlier, a man in his thirties and a four-year-old girl were released by the trio who earlier tried to rob a post office in nearby Torrance.

Protester hurt in fall
A Newbury bypass protestor was seriously injured yesterday after plunging more than 40 feet from a tree branch. The demonstrator suffered back and chest injuries and was taken to hospital in Reading.

£2m for teenager
Teenager Kevin Smith, 16, from Coventry, left severely brain-damaged after being starved of oxygen during his birth, has won £2 million in compensation at London's High Court.

Conservative Central Council: Good news as party funds improve but bad news as propaganda paper delayed Election boost as overdraft slashed

COLIN BROWN
Chief political correspondent

The Tory Party's plans for fighting the General Election were given a boost last night by the disclosure that the party had slashed its overdraft by £5m to £2.5m.

Senior party sources claimed the cut in the £10.5m overdraft had been achieved by increased donations, mainly from small businesses, and individual donors, opposed to Labour policies for a minimum wage, and the workers' rights under the European social chapter.

Some party sources said £18m had been received in donations over the past 12 months, from small businesses rather than large companies. "A range of people are giving sums which are substantial but not massive," they said.

The size of the reduction in the overdraft is certain to lead to speculation about the identity of the donors, who are being kept a secret by the Tory Party. Labour has protested at the Tories seeking financial support from foreign backers, but the sources confirmed a recent report in the *Independent* that more money is being raised in regional fund-raising events, including key businessmen in Yorkshire.

A party source admitted for the first time that the party was close to bankruptcy in 1993.

"We wondered whether we could pay the staff at the end of the month at least on two occasions, when we thought we could go bankrupt."

The turn-around was achieved by cuts in staffing at Conservative Central Office but the party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, said an increase in donations had reduced the overdraft with the Bank of Scotland. The Bank allowed the overdraft against the leasehold on its Smith Square headquarters - the party sold the freehold in the 1980s - and never called in the loan. Sources said the bank was now "more relaxed".

"It means we will have a great deal more room for manoeuvre in the general election campaign. At the last election, we were dealing with a deficit of £11m; it was one of the reasons why we opted for a poster campaign and not advertisements in newspapers. It means

we can be much more flexible in our campaign next time," said the source.

The cut in the overdraft came as Tory activists warned membership was in decline in a meeting of the Conservative Central Council in Harrogate. Graham Pycock, a member of the Dulwich and West Norwood Tories, and press officer of the Tory Charter group, said the Labour Party membership was set to exceed the Tory party membership for the first time.

The Charter group is campaigning for one-member-one-vote democracy in the Tory Party, like Labour, to raise its membership.

Dr Mawhinney, Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, and Michael Heseltine, the deputy Prime Minister, tried to lift the morale of the conference of about 600 party workers by holding out the hope of an economic recovery.

New clash over referendum as Clarke digs in

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

An imminent Cabinet row is looming next week after clear signs that Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, is still digging in over his opposition to promise a referendum on the single currency.

Mr Clarke, with the backing of Michael Heseltine, is still resisting powerful Cabinet pressure led by John Major to secure full backing for an early public commitment that Britain will not enter a referendum without a single currency.

The Chancellor is standing by his tough line despite strenuous efforts to secure a compromise by ensuring that the Cabinet would have to take collective responsibility for a decision to join a single currency and expressions of optimism by some Cabinet colleagues that they will still succeed.

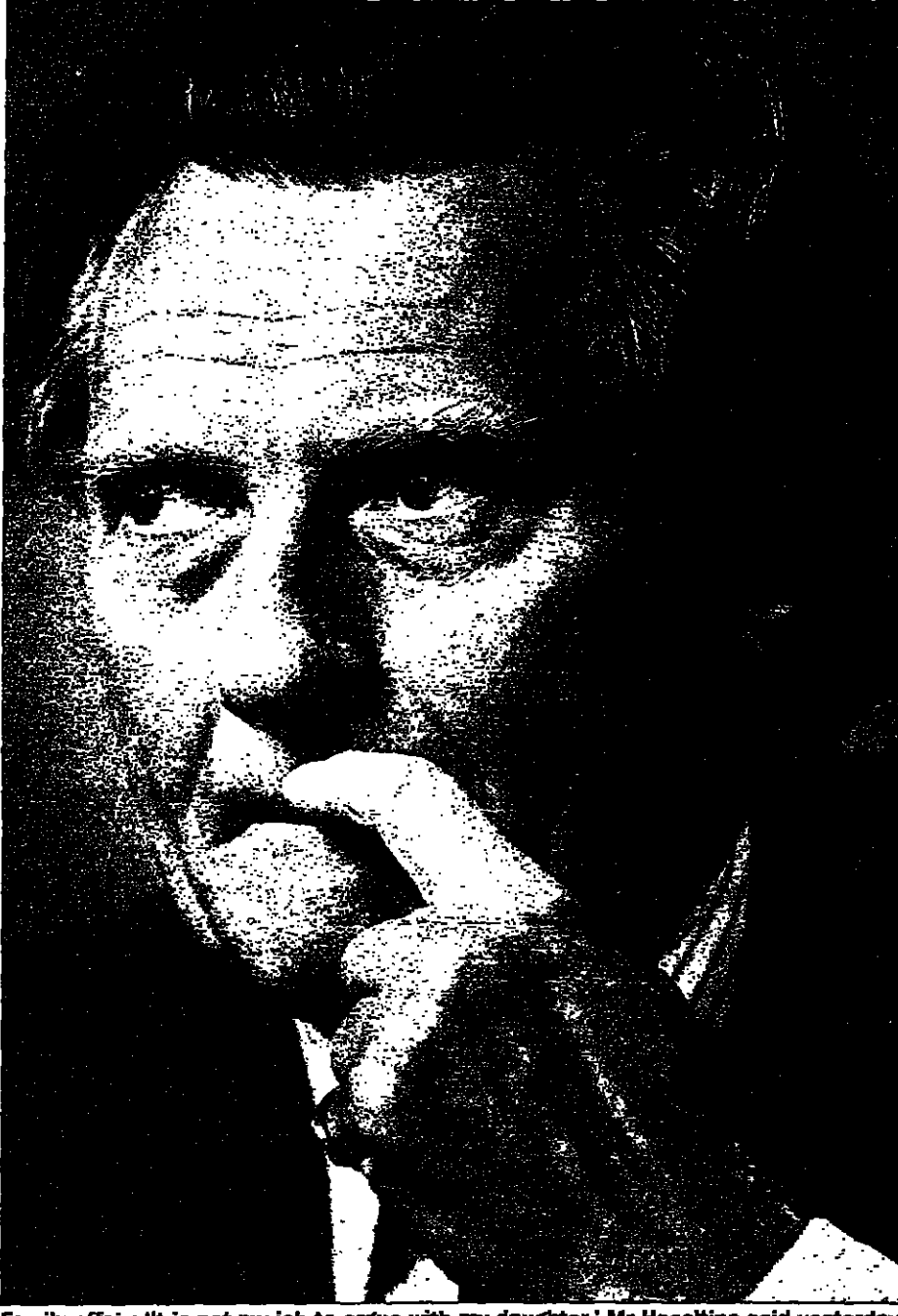
Although the final showdown has not yet been fixed for Wednesday-the last meeting of the Cabinet before the Commons' Easter recess, some Cabinet ministers are impatient to get the decision over with at that meeting.

A paper detailing the options of how to run such a referendum has already been prepared by Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary. The paper deals with such difficult questions as whether the referendum would take place before or after a decision by Parliament to approve EMU membership, what the question would be, and above all whether all the members would have to campaign for a yes vote or resign for the Cabinet if it did take a decision to join a single currency.

Mr Clarke and Mr Heseltine are said to be deeply concerned that a concessions to these backbenchers on the Tory Eurosceptic right who have been pressing for a referendum promise will only result for wider demands and that it risks the party's European policy being "salami sliced" by concessions both to backbenchers and to the strident demands of Sir James' Goldsmith's referendum party. There have been fears that Mr Clarke could yet threaten to resign over the issue. The group of eight former "whippers" backbenchers last week did indeed follow Sir James' example by calling for a referendum on wider European issues than one limited solely to the single currency.

Hopes of a compromise rest with Mr Major's personal view that any referendum should carry collective responsibility-unlike the 1975 referendum in which Harold Wilson, the then Prime Minister, allowed his Cabinet ministers according to their own views without risking their jobs.

If there was collective responsibility that would mean that Euro-sceptics would have to resign if they wanted to campaign against British EMU membership.



Family affair: 'It is not my job to argue with my daughter,' Mr Heseltine said yesterday

Heseltine snubs his daughter's views on drugs

COLIN BROWN

Michael Heseltine last night disowned the views of his own daughter, Annabel, after she called for the legalisation of drugs.

The Deputy Prime Minister brushed off her remarks as nothing more than a youthful indiscretion. "She's an adult. It's not my job to argue with my daughter and try to second guess my daughter," he said as he was challenged about her remarks. "You would not do it to your daughter," he told journalists at the Conservative Party central council in Harrogate, North Yorkshire.

Mr Heseltine suggested that his daughter was following her career as an ambitious journalist. "She has a career of her own. She has expressed her own views."

Her account in the *Daily Mail* of being offered a "sweet-smelling marijuana" joint at a dinner party, had clearly upset his breakfast.

Ms Heseltine added: "Drugs have long been part of my life, although I am not a user."

She said she had been exposed to recreational drug-taking throughout her adult life. "At dinner parties in New York, cocaine came out first with the drinks, later with the coffee."

She wrote: "I have become convinced that legalisation could be the answer to our drugs crisis."

"It would not make drugs less socially acceptable, but it might lead to control of something which currently seems uncontrollable."

Mr Heseltine is not the first minister to be embarrassed by his daughter.

Sir Nicholas Scott, the former social security minister, and his daughter, Victoria, had a public clash of views over provision for the disabled.

However, the timing of Ms Heseltine's intervention could hardly be worse - coming a day before Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, tells the conference about the Tories' plans for a fresh crackdown on drug dealers.

And Mr Heseltine had been quick to criticise Clare Short, the shadow Transport Secretary, when she suggested that legalisation of soft drugs should be considered.

It was astonishing, he said then, that "someone who could be a minister of the Crown should actually want to legalise drugs."

But after making it clear he did not support his daughter's views, Mr Heseltine insisted: "I am very proud of her. She has her own views. I will not get involved in controversy with her."

That should make things easier when he gets back to the Heseltine household.

concise crossword
No. 2948 Saturday, 30 March By Phil

Across

1. ...le (3)
4. ...h stick (8)
6. ...it to eat (12)
9. ...k equivalent of bicury (6)
11. ...eral tribute (6)
13. ...m (12)
15. ...ound (4)
17. ...former Soviet republic (8)
19. ...vehicle (5)
21. ...light horse-drawn vehicle (3)

Down

1. ...ommunion cup (7)
2. ...ircular (5)
3. ...lock of hair (5)
5. ...hill (7)
7. ...join (5)
8. ...Phases (6)
10. ...Oriental tile game (3-4)
12. ...Spins round (6)
14. ...Crowded (7)
16. ...Parrot (5)
18. ...of Athens (5)
20. ...Sound of a plucked string (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

Across: 1. Ruler, 2. War (Rome), 3. Vase, 4. Saffron, 5. Tempelhof, 6. Hat, 7. Adlib, 8. Alfie, 9. Ascot, 10. Ascombing, 11. Congo, 12. Even, 13. Net, 14. Above, 15. Down, 16. Racco, 17. Blag, 18. Sual, 19. Watch, 20. Rover, 21. Amgro, 22. Dragon, 23. Danger, 24. Larceny, 25. Light, 26. Pasta, 27. Needs

Notes

Weather forecast

NOON FORECAST

High T 15, Low 10, Wind S.W. 10-15 mph. High T 15, Low 10, Wind S.W. 10-15 mph. High T 15, Low 10, Wind S.W. 10-15 mph.

WORLD WEATHER

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud
London	15/10	S.W. 10-15	Partly
Birmingham	14/9	S.W. 10-15	Partly
Manchester	13/8	S.W. 10-15	Partly
Edinburgh	12/7	S.W. 10-15	Partly
Glasgow	11/6	S.W. 10-15	Partly
Cardiff	14/9	S.W. 10-15	Partly
Belfast	13/8	S.W. 10-15	Partly
Berlin	16/11	S.W. 10-15	Partly
Paris	17/12	S.W. 10-15	Partly
Rome	18/13	S.W. 10-15	Partly
Moscow	10/5	S.W. 10-15	Partly
Beijing	12/4	S.W. 10-15	Partly
Tokyo	14/6	S.W. 10-15	Partly
Sydney	22/15	S.W. 10-15	Partly
Melbourne	20/13	S.W. 10-15	Partly
Auckland	18/11	S.W. 10-15	Partly

LIGHTING-UP TIMES

Location	Lighting-up	Darkening
London	7:00	19:00
Birmingham	7:05	19:05
Manchester	7:10	19:10
Edinburgh	7:15	19:15
Glasgow	7:20	19:20
Cardiff	7:25	19:25
Belfast	7:30	19:30

AIR QUALITY

Location	Index	Category
London	100	Good
Birmingham	95	Good
Manchester	90	Good
Edinburgh	85	Good
Glasgow	80	Good
Cardiff	75	Good
Belfast	70	Good

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Tabloid newssheet shelved

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

The bad news about BSE in British beef claimed another victim in Harrogate yesterday - a Tory party tabloid dedicated to spreading the "good news".

The first edition was due to be launched at the Conservative Party's spring conference in the town by Brian Mawhinney, the chairman of the party.

It was to carry lively pieces extolling the virtues of the British economy, with good news about the amount of overseas investment being made in Britain.

There was also to be an overseas section with reports from abroad on what the foreigners are saying about Britain.

Edited by a former *Daily Express* deputy editor, one insider said: "It was classic than most of the mid-market tabloids." Unkind critics said it was like the *Daily Express* but with less Tory propaganda.

The brainchild of Sir Tim Bell and Maurice Saatchi, the Tory Party's advertising advisers, it followed the political Cabinet meeting ten days ago which pondered over the mystery of why the good news in the economy was not translating into a "feelgood factor".

They decided that if Fleet Street would no longer print the good news about Britain, they would do it themselves. Their foray into journalism proved short-lived. Tory spin-doctors claimed the decision had been taken for "technical reasons". But a source said: "It was the beef that did it. They thought that the good news wouldn't work."

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Club manager cleared over 'disorderly house'

S&M court case sets precedent for intervention by police

JAMES CUSICK

The criminal law which governs the right of consenting adults to take part in public acts of sadomasochism was thrown into confusion yesterday after the manager of the "whiplash" nightclub was cleared at Southwark Crown Court of keeping a disorderly house.

Martin Church, 36, of Sutton, Surrey, had told the court during his two-week trial that leather and rubber-clad revellers at the club enjoyed what they were doing and had a good time.

The basement nightclub, known as the Reflex Club on non-sadomasochistic nights, was raided by 60 police officers, some with dogs, in October 1994.

The raid was the culmination of an inquiry by vice-squad officers who hired leather outfits to infiltrate the S&M sub-culture.

In court the officers told of hundreds of largely middle-aged "fetishist clad" men and women indulging in a variety of lewd acts. Constable Graham Munro said he frequently saw men and women being beaten.

The court also heard instances where one man, dressed as a schoolgirl, was whipped repeatedly after being tied to a 6ft high padded cross. The beating was so hard, it was claimed, it drew blood.

Mr Church denied that the activities that had gone on in his club were as the Crown had claimed. He admitted customers at the Club Whiplash evenings were required to observe a "strict" dress code of fetishist gear and agreed: "Yes, I saw beatings, whippings and

spankings." But he insisted people were not screaming, moaning or crying out. He said there was no blood, no welts, no "arcs of reddening".

The jury's decision followed an address by Mr Church's counsel, Paul Higham. He said "This is a test case in 1996 on how far a jury are prepared to permit the criminal law to control and punish the acts of consenting adults, and therefore a crucial issue for civil liberties."

The verdict re-opens the legal arguments that arose from the case in 1990 known as "Op-

'What outrages the sense of morality was mass genocide in Bosnia, not the behaviour of consenting adults'

eration Spanner" where convictions were obtained on 16 men who had privately engaged in act of agreed mutilations on each other. They had been charged with aiding and abetting assaults on themselves.

After the case yesterday Mr Higham said the jury "clearly felt that even if the prosecution's allegations were carried out, in 1996 what outrages the sense of morality was the mass genocide in Bosnia not the behaviour of consenting adults in relative privacy".

In his summing-up, Judge Peter Jackson had told the jury: "One thing you will have to consider in this case is are you sure certain things happened, and if

those things did happen, do they outrage public decency."

Civil liberties campaigner Nettie Pollard described the jury's verdict as a "land mark decision".

Ms Pollard, spokeswoman for Liberty, formerly the National Council for Civil Liberties, said: "We very much welcome the decision and hope there will be no police harassment in the future."

She added: "This is a victory for civil liberties in Britain. Even if it had been a guilty verdict it was a victimless crime - everyone had consented to what was going on."

"The central issue is to what extent the criminal law should interfere in people's private lives. This [case is] important because it provides the test and answer."

Mr Church had been brought to court under a 250-year-old law - the Disorderly Houses Act. During the trial the police undercover officers described in graphic detail scenes of public sexual intercourse, oral sex, masturbation, all performed to a background of hard porn videos. However during the trial the police's evidence was challenged by members of the S&M club.

Dr Michael Jack Frost, a 60-year-old retired lecturer in geology, is a member of the Whiplash Club and was on the premises on the night of the police raid. He said he saw the video, which was "tame", but none of the other acts described by police.

Another middle-aged club member, Alison Ord, said she felt safer in Club Whiplash than in many other night clubs she had visited.

Top price for painting that awoke from 100-year slumber



Windfall: Boreas, an oil painting by the Victorian artist John William Waterhouse which was believed lost for almost 100 years, sold for nearly £850,000 at Christie's in London yesterday, more than double the expected price

Cyprus killing soldiers get life

REBECCA FOWLER

The three British soldiers found guilty of sexually assaulting and killing a young Danish woman working as a tour guide in Cyprus, were sentenced to life imprisonment yesterday.

Justin Fowler, 28, Allan Ford, 27, and Geoff Pernell, 23, The soldiers, all Royal Green Jackets, bundled Louise Jensen, 23, into their car in September 1994, and took her to a remote spot where they attempted to rape her before bludgeoning her to death with a spade.

The attack was the horrific culmination of a drunken binge at a nearby resort, and Ms Jensen was so disfigured that she had to be identified through dental records.

Sentencing the men to a further five years for abduction and another five years for conspiracy to rape, the court president Takis Eliades, told them they were responsible for one of the most brutal crimes the island had ever known. He said: "The tragic victim, alone and unprotected, had no possibility of defending herself."

Paul Jensen, the dead woman's father, said afterwards: "This was the best sentence we could have hoped for."

The soldiers were automatically discharged from the force at the moment of sentencing. They have not received wages for months, but they have been paid an allowance and the Ministry of Defence will pay their legal fees, which are expected to exceed £100,000.

Brigadier Arthur Denaro, Deputy Commander of British forces in Cyprus, said: "We can't take a number of lessons - clearly, education of troops, closer supervision, a tighter chain of command."

"But nevertheless we must not get this incident out of perspective. Horrible though it was, one would hope it was one in many millions."

Aid worker accused of stealing child in baby smuggling racket

A British aid worker accused of smuggling an infant out of a Romanian orphanage claimed last night he was the victim of a corrupt political and legal system.

John Boast, a former businessman, appeared before a Romanian court to admit he had taken the 15-month-old child from a hospital orphanage but denied he had hidden her in his lorry or brought her to Britain for adoption. The 46-year-old father of three, from Blackburn, Lancs, also denied he had been the middleman who handed the child to a British family at a motorway service station as part of a baby-smuggling racket.

The child, who can only be identified as baby Laura because she has been made a ward of court, has been legally adopted by a family in Yorkshire. Mr Boast admits he believes it was in the child's best interests to be taken out of Romania.

He said yesterday: "It doesn't matter what I say in the court; they already have decided to find me guilty to make an example of me. I am a victim of



John Boast: Denies part baby-smuggling racket

a judicial and political system which is completely upside down. By punishing me they are in reality punishing the children that I have been helping since 1990.

Outside the court Mr Boast denied he had been running a baby-smuggling ring for profit. "I came out here because I was touched by the plight of the orphans," Mr Boast yesterday appeared in court in the north

Romanian city of Oradea for the first time formally to plead not guilty to a charge of conspiring to transport the child out of the country. If found guilty he faces five year jail.

The prosecution case was outlined to an examining judge, who adjourned the hearing for a month to allow Mr Boast to "prove his innocence". The court heard how he had been on more than 40 aid trips to Romania with his lorry since 1990.

Oradea district prosecutor Lucian Negrutiu said Mr Boast had also regularly visited the city's main hospital, home to more than 450 abandoned and orphaned children.

Mr Boast told the examining judge, Dumitru Marc: "I would like you to understand a little about the child. She was 15 months old... but did not look that age because she was not well fed and had been neglected. When I saw her sitting in her bed rocking backwards and forwards, I did what any normal parent would do: I picked her up and took her out for a walk to talk to her."

Mr Boast, who now lives with his Romanian girlfriend in the village of Finis, 40 miles from Oradea, said he had taken baby Laura out of the hospital "because I wanted to take care of her. She had been abandoned and needed affection; she needed loving." Mr Boast said he took the child out for nearly four hours and claimed he returned her the same evening. It was not until five weeks later that the child's absence was noticed by hospital staff, after being told about her by British Embassy officials in Bucharest.

Baby Laura had been discovered by a social worker on a routine visit to the Yorkshire family who already have an adopted Romanian orphan. The couple would only reveal they had been given the child "by a man named John" who handed her over at the Watford Gap service station on the M1.

The British Embassy was then asked to investigate the case by the Official Solicitor.

The child's parents were traced and admitted they had abandoned her.

Bosses plump for London

NICOLE VEASH

London is one of the world's most expensive cities for executive housing and living costs: a house in the desirable centre of the city could cost up to four times the annual executive salary, according to a survey.

The lifestyle and cost comparisons between 11 of the world's main cities find property in London is costly to buy and rent but school fees are reasonable and the quality of life is good.

Lorna Vestey, of the estate agents Knight Frank, who did the survey, said demand for good housing in the capital is high but there was not a lot of it. "London has a very limited city centre in terms of size, and people from all over the world want to live here because it is a very pleasurable area. But our housing costs are generally in line with America, so international executives are not too put off by the prices."

A young married couple in their mid-thirties with a five-year-old child and a salary of about £150,000 could buy a four-bedroom house in Chelsea for £590,000 and spend £5,000 a year

on school fees. Typically, they would employ a nanny or au pair, take holidays in far-flung destinations and belong to a social/health or country club.

The survey, comparing executive lifestyles in such places as New York, Paris, Bombay and Tokyo, is based on the earnings of an investment banker or lawyer living in a typical executive home. In Madrid a four-bedroom house costs £330,000; in Hong Kong it would sell for £1.2m. Lifestyle in Paris is difficult to match because of free state schooling, though property is expensive compared to other cities.

School fees in Hong Kong, San Francisco and Sydney account for 2 to 5 per cent of annual earnings, while New Yorkers have to pay a more damaging 8 per cent.

A spokesman for the SBC Warburg bank said: "We have a global network of offices and we find the prices of renting or buying houses in London unsurprising."

Sydney and San Francisco win hands down in the world city stakes, with clean air, a safe environment, reasonable property prices and a sunny lifestyle.

Police 'ignore calls for hours'

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

Complaints about brawls, domestic disputes and rowdy youths, often go ignored for hours by police in Derbyshire because of years of underfunding, a report revealed yesterday. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary also found that during some peak periods no officers were available to answer calls from the public.

In some cases the police took so long to respond to calls about people or vehicles acting suspiciously that by the time they arrived the suspects had disappeared. The lack of police officers and resources in Derbyshire has also meant that many more violent offenders and car thieves are escaping detection. The drug squad is so hard up that at the time of the inspection it only had £380 to buy petrol for five months.

The Inspectorate warned of evidence that the financial problems facing Derbyshire were getting worse. The problems are blamed on underfunding since the early 1980s,

which has caused an increasing shortfall in officers and resources.

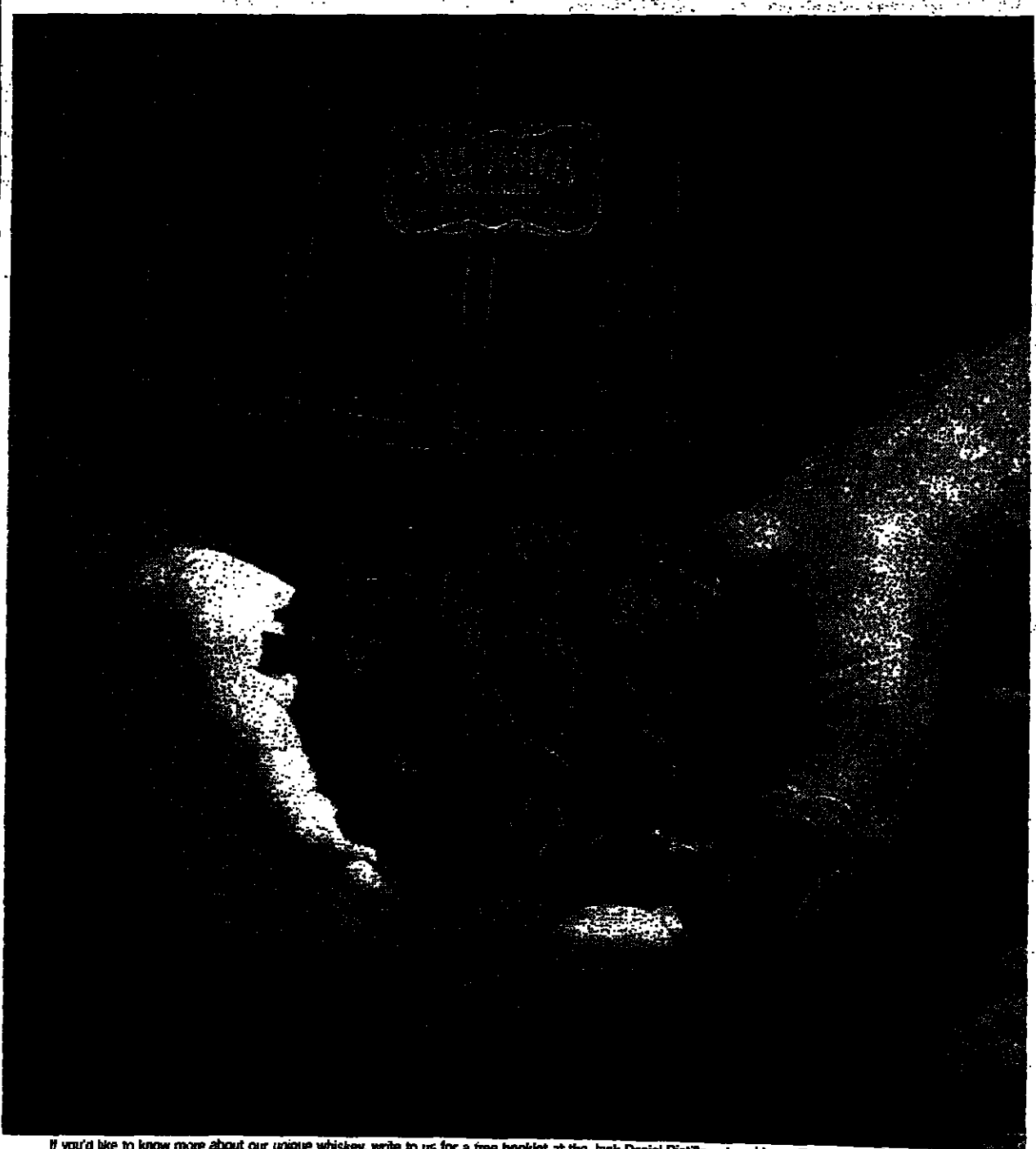
The Inspectorate says that current £88m budget from the Home Office would be more than adequate if the force was in a good financial position, but it is not enough to reverse the downward trend.

Derbyshire has been struggling to maintain its current police strength of 1,800, which has fallen as low as 1,768. People in Derbyshire had grown to accept the decline in standards, the Inspectorate said.

On a positive note there was a significant improvement in dealing with house burglaries which had dropped by 23 per cent. But using resources to deal with this crime had resulted in fewer robberies, assaults and car thefts being solved.

A spokeswoman for Derbyshire police force said: "The only way out is for the Home Office to give us more money."

David Maclean, the Home Office Minister, said Derbyshire had been given extra funding for a number of years and an additional £4m in 1996/7.



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news

UK researchers investigating Aids immunity

GLENDIA COOPER

Doctors at a London hospital are monitoring 40 British people in a search for someone who is immune to the Aids virus.

The researchers at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital are studying people who have had repeated exposure to the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) but have remained resistant to infection. They hope to report their findings within the year.

Yesterday it was announced that scientists in the US have discovered that Steve Crohn, from New York, has the first known substance in the world that will defeat HIV. Scientists at the Aaron Diamond Aids Research Center in New York took his white blood cells known as CD4 cells, which are the particular target of HIV, cultured them in the laboratory and tried unsuccessfully to infect them with HIV.

The 40 people being studied in Britain were recruited about a year ago through advertising in HIV clinics and newspapers.

"There were three components we looked for," said Dr Philippa Easterbrook, senior

lecturer in infectious diseases and epidemiology. "Firstly that they should have been exposed fairly recently - within the last year. Second, they should have had a very significant level of exposure over a two-year period and third that they should have had an HIV test recently."

Dr Easterbrook said in the past there had been various explanations put forward as to why people did not become infected with HIV including the fact that they could have been infected by someone who had low-level infection, or a weak form of the virus or that although they were infected it had not shown up in the antibodies.

She said the most recent data made it likely that immune response was an "important explanation", but she added: "We're a long way from picking up information for a specific vaccine but this data clearly has long term application." She called for more studies to be undertaken looking at the offspring of infected mothers who did not go on to develop the virus, partners of haemophiliacs who had been given infected blood, and

exposed health care workers.

Professor Frances Gotch, head of immunology at the Chelsea and Westminster, said the US findings were "extremely interesting" and showed "for the first time certain people are non-susceptible to the virus - that gives us hope for a vaccine."

Separate research in Gambia, the result of a collaboration between the Medical Research Council and the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Oxford, showed that some prostitutes had also not succumbed to the virus despite their lifestyles.

"From our research we believed that individual cases who were non-susceptible but had had high exposure were transiently infected," said Professor Gotch. "This gave the body time before CD4 cells were infected which gave other cells the chance to kick in an immune response. This would be the same effect as having a vaccine."

A spokesman for the Terrence Higgins Trust said: "We are cautiously optimistic. Hopefully it will be a small step on the long road to finding a vaccine or effective treatment."



Chain gang: Trick riders warming up yesterday in Chiswell, London, for the Mountain Biking UK Awards, run in conjunction with Bike '96, the biggest public bicycle exhibition in Britain, which is being held at Olympia

Woman jailed over £500,000 bank swindle

ROB CRANE

A housewife who swindled almost half a million pounds out of a bank by impersonating a rich elderly customer was yesterday jailed for two years.

Sally Ann Corby was part of a sophisticated gang of fraudsters which, armed with inside information, stole £490,000 from the account of Joan Lee.

Corby, 55, wore a grey wig for her visits to Barclays bank in New Malden, south-west London. On her final visit she arrived in a chauffeur-driven limousine and left with £300,000 of Mrs Lee's cash and £150,000 of her jewellery.

The court heard that Corby, who had already extracted £40,000 before the final visit and was receiving income support, played her role with "considerable panache".

Passing sentence the Recorder of London, Sir Lawrence Verney, told her:

"Having made yourself up to look like the account holder and successfully practised her signature, you presented yourself to the bank and deceived the manager very easily. You exhibited great composure, whatever you felt internally."

Corby was involved in another swindle after recruiting Gwen Cox, 39, a boatyard manager. They took £30,000 from the account of a wealthy New York recluse, Lady Monique Caro, before being caught.

Cox, who received just £1,000 from the gang, was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment, suspended for 18 months, after admitting two charges of theft and one of attempted theft.

Corby, who had been recruited to the gang by a family friend, wanted to use the £50,000 she received for her role to renovate her derelict cottage in Northam, north Devon.

The scheme's alleged mastermind is still on the run.

Top union 'fat cat' gets £300,000-a-year package

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

Britain's highest paid union leader, Gordon Taylor, chief executive of the Professional Footballers' association, now receives a package worth nearly £300,000 a year, it was revealed yesterday.

Mr Taylor, whose 2,600-strong organisation recently joined the Trades Union Congress, receives pay and benefits of £295,741, according to the annual report of the Government's Certification Office.

The union covers professional football players with a wider range of wages than any other TUC affiliate. Some league players are on as little as £15,000 a year in division three, but Mr Taylor's income is dwarfed by the £1.5m a year received by some of the premier league stars.

The document also revealed that Arthur Scargill, president

of the National Union of Mineworkers, was receiving total remuneration of £62,526 a year. The salary of the mineworkers' leader, who has presided over a union in which membership has declined from 50,000 to around 6,000 in a decade, is now linked to inflation. In effect, Mr Scargill's members each pay £10 a year towards his earnings.

The Certification Office reported that more than one-third of union leaders earned above £40,000 a year, with 31 per cent being paid between £20,000 and £40,000.

The second highest paid union leader was Mack Armstrong, general secretary of the 105,000-strong British Medical Association, who received £101,247. The next highest, on £39,343, was Peter Smith, leader of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers.

Other "fat cats" among top trade unionists were Christine

Hancock, leader of the Royal College of Nursing, on £83,501; Alan Jinkinson, who as general secretary of the Union public service union when the figures were collated in 1994 was on £77,546; and Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, who received a package worth £76,404.

John Edmonds, leader of the GMB general union and Bill Morris, general secretary of the Transport and General, were among the highest paid representatives of blue-collar workers, enjoying packages of £73,000 and £71,213, respectively. John Monks, general secretary of the TUC, received £66,120.

The Certification Office also recorded that union membership had fallen to its lowest level since the Second World War. In 1994, it fell to 8,230,545, from a peak in 1979 at 13.2 million. Fewer than one in three employees are now trade unionists.

Father's £1m award cut

A father who saw his daughters drown after their nanny drove the family car into a river, had his record £1.3m award for damages awarded cut almost in half by the Court of Appeal.

Three appeal judges yesterday reduced 53-year-old Peter Vernon's pay-out to just over £620,000, and said he must also pay his share of the legal costs, which total more than £2m. Much of Mr Vernon's damages will go straight back to the Legal Aid Board, which funded his marathon claim.

In August 1992, Mr Vernon suffered "every parent's worst nightmare" when the family Volvo, with nanny Katherine Bosley at the wheel, plunged into the River Tawe at Ynys Isaf.

Powys. Inside the car were Sophie Beloe, daughter of a family friend, his two daughters - Theresa, aged three, and Philippa, seven, - along with the family Labrador, Sheba, all of whom died. Miss Bosley escaped through the driver's window.

Mr Vernon, who arrived at the scene soon afterwards, had to watch helplessly as vain efforts were made to save the children.

In January last year, a High Court judge, Mr Justice Sedley, awarded Mr Vernon, of Kingscot, Tetbury in Gloucestershire, more than £1.3m damages against Miss Bosley's insurer - General Accident - which admitted liability.

The judge said the accident had destroyed Mr Vernon's marriage, leaving him a "helpless and dependent" shadow of his former self, and the damages award was a record pay-out for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

At the Court of Appeal yesterday, Lord Justice Stuart-Smith said that in his view Mr Vernon's claim against the insurance company should have failed. But Lord Justice Evans and Lord Justice Thorpe upheld Mr Justice Sedley's finding that Mr Vernon's mental problems were attributable to what he had witnessed on the river bank.

All three judges agreed that the award had been too high, and the pay-out was reduced to £621,940.

self Portrait

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Labour shies from renationalising rail

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR and COLIN BROWN

Labour has shied away from any commitment to renationalise Railtrack but its plans to increase regulation in the railways may scare off some potential investors.

In a long-awaited speech, Clare Short, Labour's transport spokeswoman, finally set out the party's policy, which was presented by senior party sources as "realistic and achievable".

However, the policy falls well short of a firm commitment to

renationalise Railtrack quickly, as was being demanded by the unions and the Left. Ms Short, speaking in Swindon, Berkshire, said that Railtrack would only be renationalised depending "on the availability of resources, and as priorities allow". She also failed to specify what percentage of Railtrack would be bought back — and the Government has yet to announce how much is to be sold, although it will be at least 51 per cent.

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, has clearly won the

argument in preventing any firm commitment to renationalise, even though many Labour MPs argued that the party should not allow the shareholders of a privatised Railtrack to make profits out of public money. Currently, 94 per cent of Railtrack's £2bn-per-year income comes from track access charges, which are paid by the train-operating companies who receive £1.8bn a year in subsidy.

Despite Mr Brown's victory, the Tories seized on the speech, saying that it was a return to old-style Labour pro-nationalisation

values. Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party chairman said: "This is just nationalisation: 'New Labour' 50 years old — driven by trade unions and John Prescott [deputy leader] to nationalise."

However, Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, took a different tack as he said the plans were "vacuous" and proved that Labour was not fit to govern because they failed to answer key questions about the future of the industry.

It is clear from Ms Short's speech that Labour in govern-

ment would do little to change the complex structure of privatisation set out by the Railways Act 1993. However, she said that Labour intends, by legislation, to give enhanced powers to the Rail Regulator to control the industry and get value from the industry's £2bn-worth of public subsidy.

In a mischievous part of the Act, presumably aimed at future Labour administrations, the Government specified that from the beginning of 1997 the regulator would no longer be subject to guidance from min-

isters and Ms Short has clearly committed Labour to ensuring that the regulator would have enhanced powers.

Ms Short wants the regulator to impose "fair access charges", and this may result in a reduction of Railtrack's profitability. While this increases somewhat the political risk and may deter some individual investors from buying Railtrack shares which go on sale in early May, the City appears satisfied that Railtrack will be a good investment. One City source said: "Most people were worried that Labour's

statement would have been something more material."

The City was particularly pleased that Ms Short said: "there is no question of existing contacts being cancelled against the wishes of the parties to them".

One firm commitment is that Labour will rein back on the profits which Railtrack can make from property development. Currently, Railtrack can keep 75 per cent of the profits, but Labour intends that all proceeds should be used to keep fares down.

Stalker jailed for revenge attack

A jilted lover was jailed for a total of two years at the Old Bailey yesterday for launching an obsessive terror campaign in revenge against his former girlfriend and her family.

Anthony King, a 25-year-old former disc jockey, was told by Recorder James Chadwin that his conduct was "of the most despicable kind and a gross abuse to the intimate relationship" he had with his girlfriend. Gemma Jones, 18, a magazine sales executive, and her family became victims of King's psychological stalking — fuelled by his fury after she ditched him at the end of a two-year relationship. Both her mother and father have since suffered breakdowns.

King bombed Ms Jones with telephonic calls, vandalised her father's BMW car, sprayed graffiti over their garage and posted pornographic photographs of her at a railway station and on a tree. He also suggested her parents were colour prejudiced.

He told police afterwards that he wanted "to have a pop" at them before going to Australia because he felt they did not approve of him because he was black.

In August last year, under cover of darkness, he stole into the garden of their Surrey home with a can of petrol and set fire to a pile of garden furniture just outside the house. The family's dog alerted them to the blaze, which damaged walls, guttering and windows frames.

King, from Sutton, Surrey, had admitted causing damage, displaying the photographs and arson earlier this month, but was remanded in custody for pre-sentence reports. Neither Ms Jones nor her parents were in court to see King, who has already served seven-and-a-half months in prison, sentenced.

Recorder Chadwin said that he accepted King was "under the impression you were being victimised by her parents because of your colour". He had received a letter which indicated "some support" to King's proposition, but added: "However strong your feelings about any sense of being victimised cannot possibly justify any of the acts you did."

East Coast operator warns of job cuts

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR Transport Correspondent

The new operator of the East Coast main line, Britain's most modern rail line, promised better reliability and cleaner trains but warned of job cuts among the 2,900 staff.

Great Northern Railway, a subsidiary of Sea Containers the Bermuda-based transport company, will initially receive more subsidy than currently paid to British Rail to run services on the line which runs between King's Cross, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh and Inverness, but at the end of the seven-year franchise will receive no financial support at all.

The company will get £64.6m, compared with £59.89m for BR, but with improved marketing and reduced costs, Sea Containers is confident that it can still make a profit even though it will receive no subsidy by 2003. Sea Containers plan to increase revenue, currently around £280m including subsidy, by 35 per cent over the next seven years.

Because the franchise is only for seven years, Sea Containers will not buy any new trains but has committed itself to spending £17m on station improvements. James Sherwood,



On track: The new operator of the East Coast main line has promised passengers better reliability, cleaner trains and a £17m station improvement programme. Photograph: Brian Harris

its chairman, said: "People freeze to death on draughty stations. People don't freeze in the airline business." He suggested new passenger lounges would be provided at many stations.

Great Northern Railway is committed to running the same amount of mileage as the current timetable for the next two years, though some train times may be changed. Extra services to Bradford would be

provided as well as new coach links to stations. Mr Sherwood said he would have preferred to have seen privatisation involving the selling of the track and services together rather than separately "because there are three lots of profit being made, for Railtrack, for the train operators, and for the rolling stock companies".

He added that he had spoken to several government ministers

about his concerns over the structure of privatisation and "they had said there may be better ways of doing this thing, but the most important thing was to get the railways privatised as quickly as possible".

He said that a privatised railway would inevitably be more efficient, adding: "We have to try to break the communist approach to running a railway started in the socialist period of

the 1940s." He said some redundancies were inevitable, but was unable to give a figure and said that he hoped most would be voluntary or early retirements. Asked what a change of government might mean, Mr Sherwood said he was unconcerned: "I think it would be the death of the Labour Party if they started a programme of renationalisation."

Brian Wilson, Labour's trans-

port spokesman, said: "It is extraordinary that a company based in Bermuda in order to avoid paying taxes is being given a licence to print money, funded entirely by nearly £1bn of public investment in the East Coast main line."

Mr Wilson added that under BR, the line had been profitable and that it was only as a result of the changes to the financial structure of the railways that it

had lost money in the past two years.

Police yesterday staged an early morning raid on the Southend offices of the London, Tilbury and Southend line which is the subject of an inquiry into ticket fraud allegations. The alleged fraud resulted in the allocation of the franchise to the management being withdrawn hours before it was due to take place in early February.

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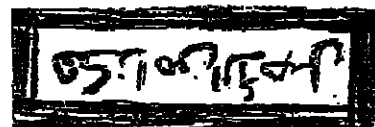
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Turin Conference: John Major on the defensive as BSE overshadows plans to take the continent into the next millennium

Europe sets course for a new union

SARAH HELM
ANDREW GUMBEL

Declaring their determination to meet the agenda for the EU until the end of the century, European leaders yesterday launched their reform conference in Turin, starting the tortuous process of re-shaping their union.

However, hopes that Turin would strike a resounding note of unity were badly undermined by the urgent need to solve the British beef crisis which threatened to produce deep new divisions between Britain and its European partners.

John Major, who had hoped to prevent the British arguments against further European integration from a position of strength, found himself on the defensive as he pleaded with his partners for their solidarity over beef.

Mr Major adamantly rejected any suggestions that he was now under pressure to make new concessions on such questions as reduction of the British veto in return for European compensation for British farmers.

The two issues, he said, were "entirely separate". Furthermore, Mr Major showed no willingness to soften his key demands for the Inter-Gov-

ernmental Conference. "Britain sees no case whatsoever for the extension of qualified majority voting," he declared. And Mr Major signalled that he would fight long and hard to reverse the recent European Court opinion on maximum working hours, by calling for a key treaty article to be re-written. Mr Major accused his European partners of acting in bad faith by allowing a loophole in the Maastricht treaty to be used to bring forward the measure calling for a maximum 48-hour working week.

However, as European leaders declared their "solidarity" with Britain over the crisis, there were strong suggestions in Turin that the episode should teach Britain a lesson about its need to enter wholeheartedly into the European venture. "Britain needs to begin to think of Europe not as a place out there but as a place they are very much a part of," John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, said.

Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, sought to move the ambitions of the Turin summit on to a higher plane by declaring that the real aim of European integration was "to provide peace and freedom in the 21st century". The leaders all reaffirmed their determina-

tion to rebuild Europe's institutions to be ready to accept new members from eastern Europe. "Future enlargement, which represents a historic mission and a great opportunity for Europe, is a challenge for the Union in all its dimensions," the final statement read.

The conclusions detailed the complex tasks which now lie ahead for the IGC which will last at least one year. The paper was couched in cautious language which will please Britain, leaving all the most contentious issues open for negotiation. "I am very pleased at the outcome of the meetings today. We have agreed a non prejudicial agenda which gives Britain a free hand to promote its objective to build Europe as a partnership of nations," said Mr Major.

While stressing the need to develop more coherent policies on areas such as justice and home affairs, as well as foreign policy and defence, the statement did not tackle the contentious issue of whether to give Brussels more power.

For the first time at a European summit, the Turin statement proposed that member states should formally consider a system of so-called "flexible geometry", which would allow some members to proceed towards integration at a faster

pace than others. However, the proposals on this issue were also vague enough to leave wide room for negotiations.

In a section on employment which could worry Britain, the statement made reference to the need for "social protection" and "better coordination and cooperation in order to strengthen national policies".

The conclusions struck a cautious tone on how to strengthen the role of the European parliament and raised the issue of how to give national parliaments a "collective role" in overseeing European decision-making. On foreign policy the Turin summit signalled its willingness to create the role of a European foreign policy supreme to represent the Union in future. However, the language on a "common defence" contained little new.

Despite the non-contentious nature of the opening statement, the battle-lines for the IGC are already drawn and hard-fought negotiations on reforming European decision-making will begin next week. Several European leaders have already made clear their hope that a more pro-European Labour government will be in power in Britain by the time the final outcome of the reform programme is decided.



John Major and the French prime minister, Jacques Chirac, in discussion in Turin yesterday

Italy's city of the lambs gives a warm welcome to British beef

With mad cow bells ringing in his ears, John Major must have been cursing his luck that yesterday's European summit had to take place in Turin.

This corner of Italy specialises in meat dishes of all kinds, but beef in particular was quite impossible to avoid. There was bresaola, a local cured beef, on the menu for the foreign ministers' lunch, and braised ox in Barolo wine on offer for the gala dinner last night.

Presumably most of this was of strictly Italian-grown stock, but at least one respectable restaurant in the centre of town

was offering beef *all'inglese*, or, as the charmingly wonky translation had it, "English Beef".

So concerned was the British delegation about the potentially indigestible diplomatic consequences of the local cuisine that it begged the summit's Italian hosts not to serve the offending animal at the working lunch offered to the Prime Minister and the other 14 European Union heads of government.

As luck would have it, though, this was the one meal where beef did not feature at all.

Instead, Mr Major was treated to grilled vegetables with Val

d'Aosta-style asparagus gratin topped, risotto flavoured with radicchio leaf, medallions of veal alla piemontese and wild strawberries with zabaglione. The beef was all in the table talk.

Actually, to Italian ears, Turin is not the city of cows — *muiche* — but rather of lambs — *agnelli*. The Agnelli family, founders of Fiat and undisputed kings of Torinese high society, were the abiding presence at yesterday's summit. Most visible was Susanna, Italy's Foreign Minister, who gave an intimately warm welcome to her eminent international guests (including exuberant kisses on each of

Malcolm Rifkind's rosy cheeks).

The Fiat Agnelli were also there, if only in spirit. The summit took place in the disused Lingotto car factory, built by Susanna's grandfather Giovanni in the 1920s when Mussolini paid a triumphant (but not rather embarrassing) visit.

Under Susanna's brother Gianni, who has just retired as Fiat chairman, the Lingotto has been converted into a giant trade fair centre covering 30,000 square metres over three floors decorated specially for the summit in the European colours red, grey and blue.

The Agnelli's industrial muscle was no doubt responsible, too, for the 30 billion lire in government grants awarded to Turin to spruce up its elegant Baroque palaces and cobbled streets.

The locals got plenty of work out of the affair, but plenty of hassle too what with cordoned off roads, wayward public transport and police sirens wailing late into the night. For the last four days the airport car park has been closed off with a sign saying "roadworks in progress"; in fact, it was just being reserved for official limousines.

One VIP who made a point

of admiring the well-scrubbed city was Lamberto Dini, Italy's prime minister, who was hoping to use the summit to help launch his brand new political party today in the run-up to next month's Italian general elections. He and his glamorous wife Donatella went for a private walkabout in the centre on Thursday night, and showered compliments on a city they said looked like it was "in evening dress".

But if they were hoping for adoring crowds they were disappointed. "Several people recognised him," reported one local paper, "but traditional

Torinese reserve stopped anyone from approaching him."

Yesterday was a similar public relations disappointment. Mr Dini was beaming from ear to ear as he welcomed his fellow leaders in the morning. But by mid-afternoon he had lost his voice and could scarcely croak his way through a scheduled news conference. His political nickname is already "the toad" (an unkind reference to his facial appearance). Now he could be croaking all the way to the ballot box.

An over-enthusiastic local tourist brochure once described Turin as a city "that penetrates

interstellar space". The freebies on offer at the summit were equally loose with their language, especially their delightfully off-key English language. One offering was a video about Turin made for the city by a young Chinese director, Ning Ying. "I left China with these thoughts in mind: to discover a European city which cultivates in its soul a vocation for capital," she explained on the back cover. What on earth did she mean? And what impact is this city having on the soul of the EU?

Andrew Gumbel

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Fury over imports leaves nut factory in flames

Barcelona (Reuters) — A nut factory was burned down in north-east Spain by a little-known band of revolutionaries protesting at imports of Turkish hazelnuts, a regional government spokesman said yesterday.

"Traitor importers, Turkish hazelnuts, death," was found daubed on a wall that was left standing.

The factory belonged to Borges SA de Reus which has 60 per cent of the Spanish nut market. Twenty-five fire engines took four hours to extinguish the blaze which destroyed tons of almonds, pistachios and hazelnuts, causing an estimated £25m of damage.

A caller to a Spanish news agency claimed the Revolution-

ary Peasants' Union was responsible and said the fire was a warning. "This is the first time we've heard of them," the spokesman in the Catalan agriculture department said.

Turkish hazelnuts have been flooding into Spain in recent months, he said. Tariffs fell last year to zero for the first 25,000 tons of raw hazelnuts and four

per cent thereafter, and nuts also come in tariff-free under the category of processed food.

"It's distorting the market because production costs are infinitely lower in Turkey than here," the spokesman said. The official Peasants' Union has already denounced Borges for selling Turkish hazelnuts under a local label.

IN BRIEF

Peaceful hand over in Sierra Leone

Freetown — An elected government took power yesterday in Sierra Leone, which overcame civil war and a military coup to complete the transition to civilian rule. In one of the region's rare peaceful handovers of power, President-elect Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, a lawyer and long-time politician and United Nations development worker, took over from military leader General Julius Maada Bio amid thunderous applause and a 21-gun salute.

General Bio, in power since leading a coup on 16 January, reminded Mr Kabbah of his tasks in a speech on the eve of the inauguration. "As I speak today, there are still 2.1 million Sierra Leoneans, or 47 per cent of the country's population, who have been forced by violence to abandon their homes," he told diplomats and international aid groups. "The outlook is grim." AP

Man arrested in Cambodian kidnap case

Siem Reap, Cambodia — A man alleged to have helped gunmen kidnap a British mine disposal expert and his interpreter has been arrested, Cambodian authorities said yesterday. The Governor of Siem Reap province Toun Chhay said the man, a former Khmer Rouge guerrilla who defected to the government, led the gang to where Christopher Howes and his mine-clearing colleagues were seized on Tuesday. Mr Chhay said villagers acting as intermediaries were again heading out to the gang's forest hideout to continue efforts to negotiate the release of Mr Howes and his interpreter. The gang is about 30-strong and at least some of its members are former Khmer Rouge guerrillas. Reuters

Hong Kong urged to fight for democracy

Hong Kong — Democracy groups in Hong Kong urged people on Friday to take to the streets to fight for democracy and resist China's efforts to abolish the British colony's legislature when Beijing takes over next year. Pro-democracy parties, labour unions and pressure groups banded together in a call for a protest march on Sunday to China's headquarters in the territory, according to the Xinhua News Agency. Reuters

Military warns of 'inevitable' war in Korea

Tokyo — A senior North Korean military official warned that the armistice on the Korean Peninsula was nearing its limit and a new war in the area was becoming inevitable. In a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency, Vice-Marshal Kim Kwang-jin, first vice-minister of the People's Armed Forces, said there were signs of military movements south of the demarcation line between North and South Korea. Reuters

Vietnam clamps down on treasure theft

Hanoi — Vietnam said yesterday it was moving to clamp down on a booming trade in precious statues and treasures being smuggled out of the country for the art galleries and antique shops of south-east Asia and the West. A Culture Ministry official said there was growing alarm in Hanoi at the brazen manner in which ancient artefacts were being stripped from the country's temples and museums. Reuters

Romania warned of Mafia danger

Bucharest — Italian anti-mafia prosecutor Bruno Siclari warned Romania yesterday it was ripe for exploitation by organised crime. Speaking at a news conference, he said he was in the country to sound the alarm: to prevent Romania from having to face "an infiltration of the Mafia". Reuters

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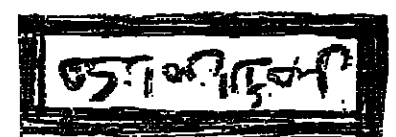
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europe

Three die in French shoot-out

OLIVIER HAMOIR
Reuter

Roubaix — Three suspected armed robbers were killed and two policemen wounded yesterday in a shoot-out with police near the northern French city of Lille, where ministers of the Group of Seven industrial nations are due to meet on Monday.

A fourth suspected gangster who fled the scene was later killed in an exchange of fire with Belgian police near the Belgian city of Kortrijk.

Belgian police said that another of the fleeing robbers was holding two women hostage in a house by a motorway in north-west Belgium.

French officials insisted that the clashes, and a related car bombing attempt in Lille on Thursday night, involved criminals, not terrorists. But it was not clear why armed robbers would detonate a car bomb or fight to the death when surrounded. Officials said the attacks were not linked with last year's wave of bombings by Algerian Muslim radicals, nor to the Group of Seven meeting.

"These two affairs have nothing to do with terrorism, they are criminal matters," the Interior Minister, Jean-Louis Debré, said. "It has nothing to do, as far as I can tell, with Islamism or terrorism."

The first three deaths occurred when police anti-terrorist units stormed a house in Roubaix early yesterday, hours after a detonator exploded in a booby-trapped car parked outside the main police station in nearby Lille. The station is some 300 metres away from Lille's Grand Palais, the venue for the Group of Seven conference.

The intense gun battle set the Roubaix house alight, and police later found three charred bodies in the ruins. Several armed men in a BMW fleeing Roubaix escaped after an exchange of gunfire when police tried to halt the vehicle.

Police in the Lille area and in nearby southern Belgium have been hunting a heavily armed gang who have killed and injured several people in attacks on armoured security vans carrying cash for banks and supermarkets. The gang, which last struck this week near Lille, has used rocket launchers and sub-machine guns.

The Lille car bomb was made up of three 13kg gas canisters. The canisters failed to explode and were detonated by the police on Thursday night. The hunt for the bombers led police to surround and storm the house in Roubaix, near a mosque reported to be a meeting place for Islamic fundamentalists.

Police said they spotted three Moroccan and a man of Algerian origin, who were under surveillance for suspected armed robbery, fleeing the scene of the Lille car bombing.

France suffered a wave of bombings by suspected Algerian Muslim radicals last year in which eight people died and more than 170 were injured.



Under cover: Police open fire as they prepare to storm an armed gang's hideout in Roubaix, France. Photograph: Reuter

Squabbles mark end of an era as Giscard quits

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

Some time tomorrow, the state figure of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing will walk out of a packed hall in Lyons and end an era in French politics. The Union pour la Démocratie Française, the centre-right grouping he founded to fight the 1978 parliamentary elections and has headed ever since, will have passed to a new leader.

Although he is "only" 70, his departure comes none too soon for many, including UDF members. There, the feeling has grown that the man who in 1974 became France's youngest president was out of his time. This time last year Mr Giscard took what was an agonising decision not to run for the presidency again, accepting that his career at the top of French politics was over. He put his weight behind Jacques Chirac and, as head of the second-largest group in the parliamentary coalition, was rewarded with a measure of influence in the new government, though it has not been as evident as he might have wished.

He criticised Mr Chirac for not being vocal enough in his commitment to the European project and not precise enough in his Europe policy. He was also angered when the government approved the name euro for the projected European currency rather than stick with the ecu he had helped to name.

At the same time, he recently appeared to undermine the government's official position on the single currency — that France would be ready on time for the January 1999 deadline — suggesting the criteria for joining could be more flexible.

He also coined the term "Euro-fundamentalists" to describe those he felt were too zealous in pursuit of full integration.

The contrast between Mr Giscard's tendency to snipe from the sidelines and the magisterial image he cultivated as president and then as UDF leader could hardly be greater. But the seeds of the difficulties he is facing on the fringes of power were already there.

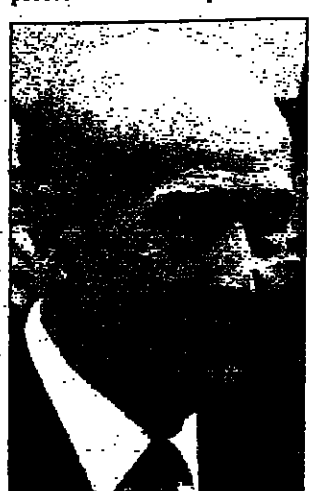
Footage of his presidential broadcasts shows a young president trying to give a more modern air to an institution he had inherited, but without the personal weight fully to impose himself: less the epitome of France's "golden youth" than a transitional figure straddling the traditions of old privilege — châteaux in the country, stag-hunting and gastronomy — and the new managerial, European and business-orientated approach to power.

The affair of the Central African diamonds that he may or may not have accepted from Emperor Jean-Bédél Bokassa helped end his presidential ca-

reer. Failure to clear up the matter satisfactorily showed that the conflict between old empire and new ethics has still not been fully resolved.

The final months of Mr Giscard's UDF leadership were not the graceful departure he might have hoped for. An ardent pro-European, he leaves at a time of divergent views about its future. Failure to be elected mayor of his adopted city of Clermont-Ferrand in June, losing to the Socialist incumbent against the national trend, he took as a personal blow. Nor has his family been spared: a nephew received a hefty fine and suspended prison sentence for involvement in a corruption scandal in Lyons.

Recently even the nature of his UDF leadership has come in for personal criticism. When he called for a policy debate to precede the leadership ballot for



Giscard d'Estaing: Felt by many to be an anachronism

his successor, Simone Veil, a minister in the Balladur government and still one of France's most respected politicians, scornfully said that it came from a man who had spent most of his life "avoiding debate".

The in-fighting over the succession is perhaps the final insult to his leadership, calling into question the future of the UDF after he goes. The "natural" successor, François Léotard, is at daggers drawn with Mr Giscard, having pledged to "erect a pillar inscribed with the names of all the people who — Giscard — destroyed". The other main candidate, Alain Madelin, has dubious centrist and European credentials but appears to have Mr Giscard's tacit support.

There are those who say Mr Giscard could spring one last surprise. Having tantalised the public by promising, then declining, to back one of the two main candidates for his job, some think he could break a possible deadlock tomorrow and offer to remain. But he insists his decision is made.

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Russians bomb own troops in Chechen war

HELEN WOMACK
Moscow

Russian forces rounded off a week in which they have pounded Chechen villages by accidentally bombing their own troop positions, it was revealed yesterday. The disastrous incident, in which soldiers and civilians were killed, will hardly serve to produce a receptive audience when President Boris

Yeltsin goes on television tomorrow to announce a new plan to end the war in Chechnya, before the June elections. The commander of Russian forces in Chechnya, General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, was forced to apologise for what he called the "accidental" bombing of the western village of Katyr-Yurt on Thursday. Nine civilians and an unspecified number of troops died.

The incident prompted even the pro-Kremlin puppet government in Grozny to protest. A spokesman suggested it may not have been an accident. Katyr-Yurt was a settlement which had handed over its weapons in exchange for security guarantees from the army, yet it had been bombed, he said. "Clearly there are forces among the Russian military who are interested in continuing the war."

Mr Yeltsin is not. He knows he must extinguish the conflict, which he has called the "biggest disappointment of my presidency", if he is to stand a chance of overtaking his Communist opponent, Gennady Zyuganov, currently the front runner in the presidential election race. But his plan is going to have to be a magic one to succeed, and all the signs are that it falls short.

Earlier this month, rumours swept Moscow that Mr Yeltsin was going to sack the Defence Minister, Pavel Grachev, who helped drag Russia into the war in 1994. His dismissal would have indicated new thinking in the Kremlin. But the general has made three trips to Chechnya in as many weeks to oversee a Russian operations which observers say have been as brutal as any in the war.

Russian tanks were reported to be surrounding Chechen villages, making them sign peace agreements under duress. But there have been no talks with the separatist leader, General Dzhohar Dudayev, although a recent poll showed 57 per cent of Russians favoured this idea. Instead, the Russian army has attacked rebel positions, pushing Dudayev's men back into the southern mountains.

General Grachev said this week that after Mr Yeltsin's speech, large-scale military operations would cease. But General Dudayev, who still regards himself as being at war with Russia, cannot be relied on to play Mr Yeltsin's election game. In the absence of a proper settlement with all parties, the risk remains of terrorist raids, like that carried out in Kizlyar in January.

One presidential candidate Grigory Yavlinsky on Thursday dismissed Mr Yeltsin's peace plan as a "myth" and called for demonstrations against the "genocide" in Chechnya. But on another front, Mr Yeltsin's election chances were boosted yesterday, when the republics of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement on economic integration with Russia without loss of sovereignty.

Church row over 'white' cemetery

DAVID USBORNE
New York

An attempt by a Southern Baptist church in rural Georgia to have the body of a mixed-race infant disinterred just days after its burial to keep its cemetery "100-per-cent white" has re-ignited racial anger in the American deep south.

The controversy over the fate of the body of Whitney Johnson, who died 19 hours after birth, has cast an unwelcome pall over the Protestant Southern Baptist Convention which was founded 150 years ago partly in defence of American slavery.

Whitney's family was informed by the Barnett's Creek Baptist Church in Thomasville, Georgia, that the girl's funeral had been a mistake and that the body would have to be disinterred and buried elsewhere. Whitney's mother, Jaime Wireman, is white, and her father, Jeffrey Johnson, is black.

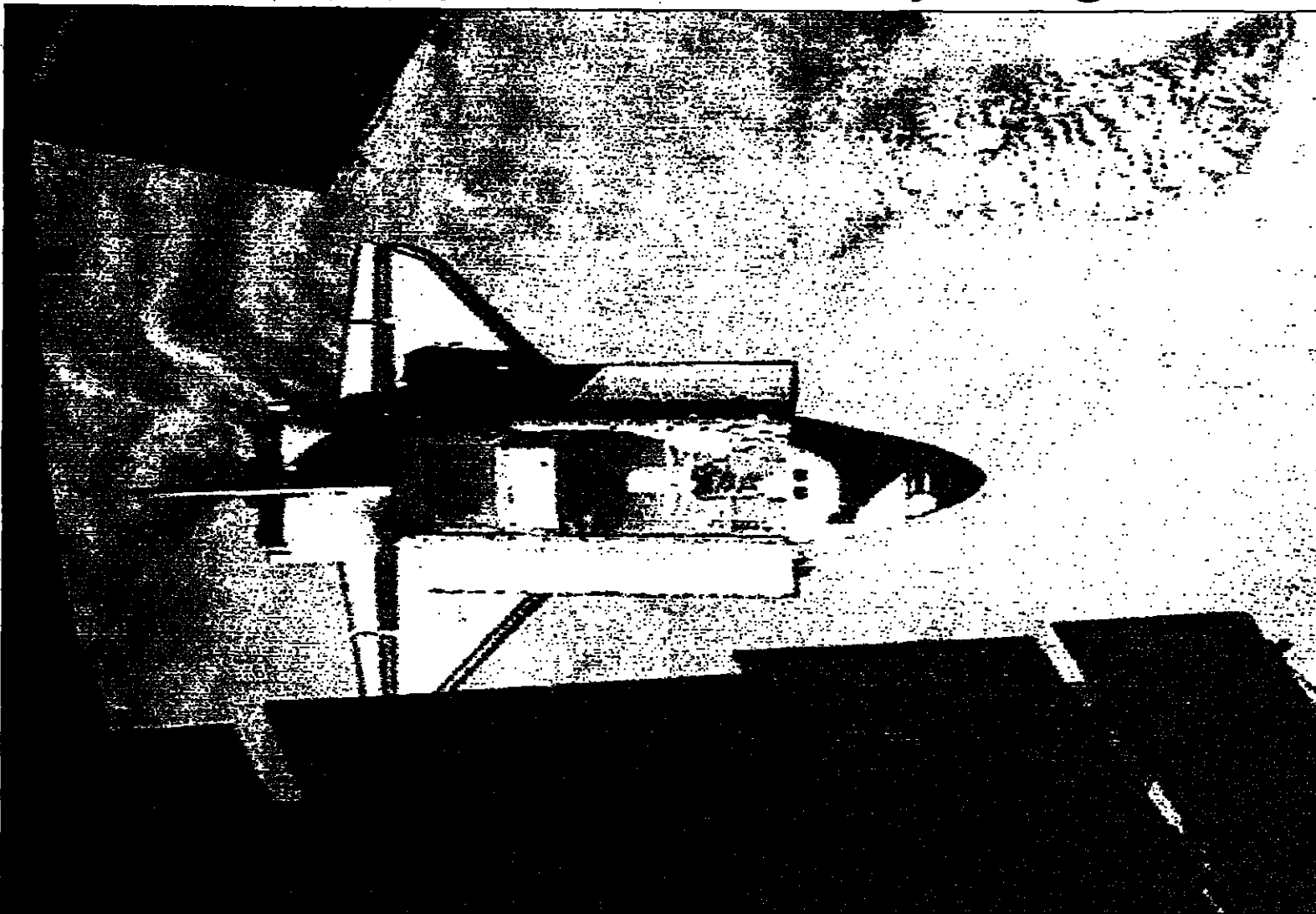
The astonishing message was apparently delivered by Logan Lewis, the pastor of the church. "He said they don't allow half-breeds in their cemetery," the baby's grandmother said. "[The pastor] said: 'That's a 100-per-cent white cemetery'."

Mr Lewis was quoted in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* as saying: "There's not any mixing of cemeteries anywhere in this area. If someone white asked to be buried in a black cemetery, he'd be a laughing stock."

The church also claimed that it had been unaware of the race of the baby until it became obvious at the open-casket funeral. The pastor has since written to the funeral home to complain about "being deceived".

Such has been the publicity surrounding the affair, that the church has backed down and will allow Whitney to remain at rest alongside other deceased members of the Wireman family. But for the Baptist Convention, which last year issued a resolution to "repudiate historic acts of evil such as slavery", the damage is done.

Atlantis says goodbye to Mir after five days of togetherness



The space shuttle Atlantis seen between the solar panels of the Russian space station Mir after undocking

Photograph: AP/Nasa TV

Besieged vigilantes 'close to surrender'

TIM CORNWELL
Los Angeles

The Freemen of Montana live in "a netherworld of alternative reality", according to experts on the American far-right fringe.

They write cheques for huge sums, drawn on fictitious banks, take grand titles like Justice of the Peace and spout English common law in court submissions that run to hundreds of pages but make little sense. But their cheques were good enough to persuade car dealers to hand over a small fleet of late-model trucks and

to defraud banks and mail-order firms of \$1.8m (£1.2m), it is alleged. And their smoke-and-mirrors financial schemes convinced hundreds of people to join expensive "training" courses in Montana and California.

A reported 100 FBI agents and local police yesterday continued to surround a remote Montana ranch where about a dozen armed Freemen were said to be holed up. Yesterday the stand-off, which authorities are at pains not to describe as a siege, entered its fifth day. The FBI remained determined to

avoid a repetition of blundered and bloody encounters with fringe and cult groups at Waco, Texas and Ruby Ridge, Idaho.

Though supplies of food and electricity to the ranch were cut off, agents have allowed a sister of two Freemen leaders to deliver a surrender petition which she helped to write. The Freemen, like other militant anti-government groups that have flourished in the US in recent years, typically denounce the US government as an illegal conspiracy. They refuse to pay taxes, carry drivers' licences or recognise American courts

and believe the US Constitution grants more rights to white than non-white citizens. But the Freemen and associated groups, said to number several hundred across the US, are also described as able communists.

While other pro-gun militia groups began military training, the Freemen made their protests through legal go-bledygo and financial fakery.

They used phony law suits to harass local officials. In Colorado, for \$300, they showed farmers how to pay off farm loans by printing certified money orders on home computers.

Several dozen people showed up for courses each weekend at their ranch, the "Justus Township", where those inside are wanted for fraud and death threats. One Freemen graduate, Mary Broderick, held two-day workshops in the Los Angeles area offering a quick fix to money and tax problems and drawing hundreds of people.

Ms Broderick dropped out of sight in the desert town of Lancaster, California this week when prosecutors sought a restraining order, saying \$30m worth of fake cheques had reached the Government.

Serb prisoners 'forced to eat soap' during months of beatings in solitary confinement

Doboj, Bosnia — Outside the door of the Red Cross office here in the Serbian sector of northern Bosnia, a dozen anxious women gather on the off-chance of news. Their husbands are not among the 109 prisoners released by the Bosnian Muslims in Tuzla, 60 miles away, but perhaps one of the 109 has seen or heard of their men, most of them missing since the Serbs were pushed back in the September 1995 offensive.

No news is not good news. One woman, pale and jumpy, poured out her fears that her husband had been "ritually murdered" by the mujahedin, whom many Serbs believe were sent in their thousands from Arab countries to fight for the Muslims.

The Red Cross managed to register lists of Tuzla prisoners last month, but many men are unaccounted for. Former pris-

oners said they were not visited by any humanitarian agency for the first three or four months of their captivity.

All the newly released prisoners I talked to were reluctant conscripts, and none seemed to know what the war was about. One, a grizzled, unshaven sergeant wearing a bright new jacket, described his 45 days of solitary confinement and of interrogation — on how many women he had raped and how many Muslims he had killed — accompanied by blindfolding and beatings.

Later he was put in a shared cell in a regular prison. "Work" there consisted of being handcuffed to a fence and made to pull grass. Sometimes he was taken into the prison yard to

pick up cigarette butts dropped by the more kindly treated Muslim prisoners — deserters — who were kept separate from the Serbs, but who could watch him at his task. His guards got some fun out of making him shout: "I'm a dirty Chetnik!"

Another man told of being captured when Muslim forces overran Serb positions. He was shut in a disused ambulance shed for two days, where he claimed he and his companions were beaten and humiliated, forced to "eat paper and soap", and given one-and-a-half litres of water a day for 30 men.

Later, they were taken to Tuzla and put into a civilian prison, he said. Forty men were held in a cell 20 metres square and kept there for three months without

exercise or medical attention, apart from aspirins, for the wounded and sick. The men were often forbidden to sit down during the day. Drinking-water had to be collected in bottles from the toilets, which they visited three times a day. They were given no changes of clothes, no heating, and nothing to do.

After three months they were taken out on work details, digging canals and rebuilding ruined buildings. After the months of darkness and confinement, he said, they "could hardly see or walk". He claimed that as the prisoners worked, guards subjected them to random beatings.

He described his release as "a new birth". I asked him what he

had done the night before, after being reunited with his family. "No going out drinking," he said. "I was drunk on the alcohol of life."

■ The Hague (Reuters) — The United Nations criminal tribunal for former Yugoslavia said on Friday it was returning the Bosnian Serb Colonel Alekss Krstanovic to the custody of the Bosnian government in Sarajevo.

Colonel Krstanovic was captured with General Djordje Djukic by Bosnian government forces on 30 January and was transferred to the tribunal's custody on 12 February.

Djukic was later charged with war crimes in connection with the siege of Sarajevo. The chief prosecutor Richard Goldstone earlier told the tribunal that there was no reason to hold Krstanovic any longer in The Hague as he was unwilling to co-operate as a witness.

US pledges to aid suffering Palestinians

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

The United States has proposed a plan at the anti-terrorism conference in Washington to pump money and jobs into the West Bank and Gaza in order to aid Palestinians who are suffering from the Israeli economic blockade.

Warren Christopher, the US Secretary of State, told envoys from the 27 states attending the conference that "the merchants of terror" must be defeated, but "we must find ways to support the Palestinian people as they, too, suffer the consequences of the Hamas bombings."

Saeed Erekat, a senior Palestinian official, called for \$100m (£65m) in emergency funds to help Palestinians avoid starvation and head off a "major explosion" in the West Bank and Gaza. "The peace process has come to a halt, and war is being waged against [Yasser] Arafat and the Palestinian people," he said.

Israel has sealed off the 2.3 million Palestinians in the occupied territories as a security measure and as a collective

punishment, after four suicide bombs killed 62 people in Israel. A ban on all Palestinians working in Israel has crippled the economy of the West Bank and Gaza.

The plan, details of which have still to be spelled out, is the result of pressure on the US from Arab and European states and the Palestinians.

After talking by phone with Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, and Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, Mr Christopher said: "We have agreed on the development of an emergency plan designed to improve the economic situation in Gaza and the West Bank."

The materials necessary for the jobs programme will be allowed into Palestinian areas. Convoys, including those containing citrus exports from Gaza, transporting goods to and from Israeli ports and Jordanian crossing points, would be increased.

More trucks will be allowed to bring imports from Egypt into the West Bank and Gaza. Differences have emerged between the US and its European allies over the follow-up to the "summit of peace-makers" in Egypt two weeks ago.

France has reportedly been seeking support from Germany, Italy and Britain to spearhead a European initiative, arguing that the follow-up conference ought to consider the causes of terrorism, and not only the effects. France believes repressive policies will not help the peace process in the long run.

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OUR SCORCHED EARTH

Burn out

In the first of a three-part series, Nick Schoon outlines the radically altered global climate that will form our grandchildren's inheritance

Last year was the earth's warmest since world temperature records began more than a century ago.

At the start of this month, Britain experienced the worst ever damage to the part of the ozone layer that hangs high above it in the stratosphere.

The theoretical has become the actual. Hazards that just a few years ago seemed entirely within the realms of scientific speculation are affecting us, here and now. The consequences for us and our children over the next 10, 20, 50 years could be catastrophic and will certainly be far-reaching.

A little over 20 years ago, we got the first warnings that the build-up of a group of non-toxic, ubiquitous industrial chemicals, CFCs and others, in the atmosphere could theoretically deplete the ozone layer that shields life from much of the incoming ultraviolet light in sunshine.

Ten years ago, the first ozone hole was detected over the Antarctic by the British Antarctic Survey. It was a startling demonstration of the power of pollution: very low concentrations of a fairly innocuous contaminant could drastically alter the physics of the atmosphere over an entire continent.

But it was earlier this month that ozone destruction really came home. Instruments at either end of the country - at Lerwick in Shetland and Cambridge in Cornwall - measured the lowest levels of stratospheric ozone recorded over Britain in 20 years of watching the skies. An ozone hole - thankfully, a short-lived one - was opening over Britain.

At the same time, other instruments detected an unprecedented surge in UV-B radiation shining down on these islands. The levels of this potentially dangerous radiation, which can cause skin cancers, were of the same strength as those normally found in May when the sun is much higher in the sky.

Fortunately, we are attempting to avert the dangerous and unwitting experiment with the ozone layer. A series of international agreements is cracking down on the chemicals that destroy it. But that does not mean the threat is over. There is a fierce argument about whether the pace of the phase-out is fast enough. Holes will continue to appear for decades to come.

But our bigger and still more dangerous experiment with the climate is only just beginning. Global warming has moved out of the realms of theory: it's with us and with a vengeance.

Scientists have been warning for more than a century that burning fossil fuels and forests would raise temperatures, alter

climate and raise sea levels. Last November, under the auspices of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, they reached a consensus that this temperature rise can now be detected. The Eighties and Nineties have seen nine of the 10 hottest years on record.

But unlike the ozone layer, there are as yet no agreements in place that will slow down and reverse this process. Even if, overnight, the world miraculously halted its use of fossil fuels, global warming would continue - because of the thermal momentum already built up and because 50 per cent would not be a sufficiently large cutback.

So it is going to be a hotter world in the next century. If we continue to remain hooked on fossil fuel (there is still at least a century worth of reserves underground) the century after that will be hotter still. The question that climatologists and their models cannot yet answer is exactly

'If ice caps slide into the sea and melt, sea levels will rise by hundreds of feet'

how much warmer. And precisely where it will be warmer, wetter, drier, or stormier.

Every aspect of society, of our children and grandchildren's lives, will be affected. Today's thirty-somethings will probably have to cope with climate shifts in their retirement years. But their children and grandchildren will have to learn to take much more drastic measures.

Our economies, health, agriculture, leisure activities and water supplies will all have to adjust. Nations may come into conflict because of water and food shortages exacerbated by global warming, so diplomacy and defence strategies will be affected, too.

Because the scientists are still several years from being able to make good regional predictions, it is impossible to know exactly what global warming has in store for Britain through the 21st century. Today's supercomputer forecasts suggest a slightly warmer and even rainier group of islands. But the stronger heat in summer could easily counter-balance the extra rainfall through increased evaporation, making Britain a drier place.

Several recent very mild winters in the UK and the record-breaking heat of last summer could be harbingers of the global

warming. So could the English drought between 1989 and 1992, and the much more severe drought of last year that is now certain to resume this summer. The consequences for how we collect, distribute and use water will be far-reaching.

The rainfall shortage has made the water companies question all their assumptions about resources and demand, and caused a frantic investment in extra supplies in some regions.

Worldwide, there are other signals that global warming is already here. Most mountain glaciers for which we have good records are shortening, retreating higher and higher as they melt away.

One of the strongest warming trends has been in the Antarctic Peninsula - 2.5°C warmer in 50 years. In the last Antarctic summer (our winter of 1994/95), huge thick, floating ice shelves covering about 2,000 square miles of sea rapidly broke up - the first time this has been observed.

The most advanced predictions, such as those being produced by the Meteorological Office's Hadley Centre in Bracknell, Berkshire, suggest that globally average surface temperatures will rise 1°C between now and 2040.

While 1°C in 50 years may sound trivial, the 0.2°C a decade rise this implies is faster than any since the last Ice Age ended 10,000 years ago. This alone is enough to disrupt natural ecosystems and agriculture.

But on top of this temperature rise will come changes in rainfall, wind patterns and soil moisture content, adding to the impact. They are only forecasts based on an incomplete understanding of how the earth's atmosphere, oceans, icecaps and plantlife will respond to the warming - dampening or accelerating it. But if the huge on-land ice caps of Greenland and Antarctica were to become detached, slide into the sea and melt, sea levels would rise not by the two feet forecast for 2100 using computer models - but by hundreds of feet. A land area the size of a large continent would disappear.

If global warming were to halt or divert the Gulf Stream, Britain and western Europe would become much colder. The risks of widespread, climate-caused death, disease and famine are ever higher in an increasingly crowded world, with dense populations packed into areas prone to drought, floods and crop failures.

A few decades beyond the millennium, we may see the Nineties as a wasted decade in which we chose to continue adding to these risks despite strong early warnings.

The will to prevent climatic disaster?

Leaders in politics and business know all about the threat of global warming. But across most of the world they seem unable or unwilling to address it.

In 1988, they set up the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (the IPCC) to report on the pace and scope of the likely changes, how people could adapt to them and what strategies could reduce the rate of change.

The IPCC finished its first very long set of reports in 1990. The next step was to negotiate a climate protection treaty. That was concluded by May 1992, in time for the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Presidents and prime ministers from 180 nations who had gathered in Brazil signed the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

But while this treaty provides a fine legal basis for tackling the problem, it bound not one single country to reduce its output of global warming gases. Globally these emissions are rising by about 2 per cent a year as populations grow and devel-

oping countries industrialise. The 36 most developed, industrialised countries including Britain did make a non-binding commitment to stabilise their emissions at the 1990 level by the year 2000.

The point of this was to lead by example. It is now certain that many of them, including important players such as the USA and Canada, will fail to meet this commitment. Britain is one of the few developed nations that will have lowered its emissions through the 1990s.

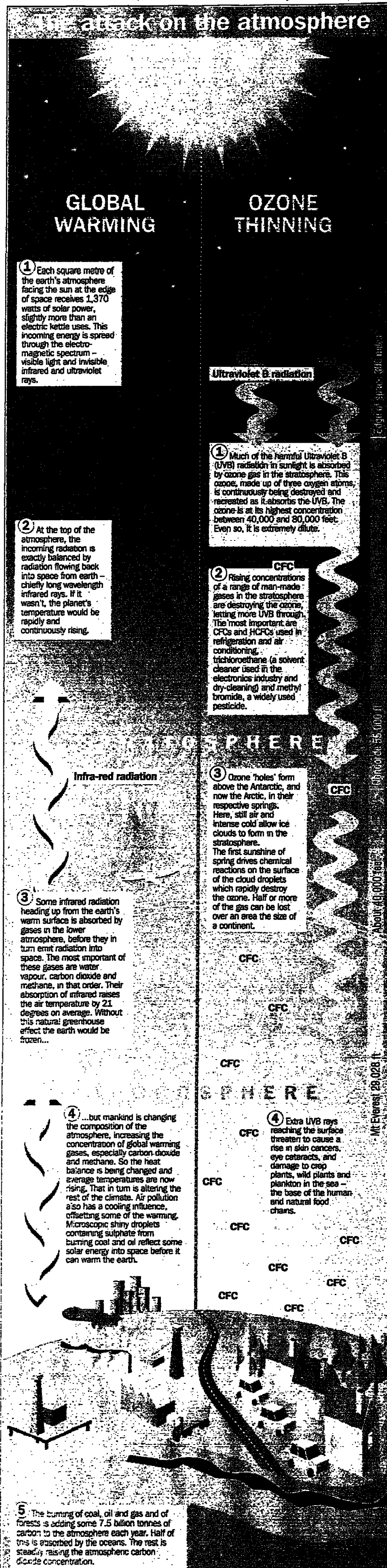
A year ago, in Berlin, the first "Conference of the Parties" to this treaty took place. This ended with the developed countries promising that, by late 1997, they would negotiate further limits on their emissions beyond the turn of the century. Whether this means that they will commit themselves to cuts, rather than slowing growth, is not clear. Britain and Germany advocate reductions. There are no controls on rising Third World emissions.

Scientists say emissions need to be a cut by about 70 per cent to stabilise the con-

centration of heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere and halt warming.

As people become wealthier and more mobile across the world their economies need more energy, and the bulk of it comes from coal, oil and gas. The politicians find it extremely difficult to tax or regulate industry, commerce and households into using less. Sir Crispin Tickell is an ex-diplomat and mandarin who alerted Margaret Thatcher to global warming. An advanced student of climatology, he still retains some influence on Government. "We're all a bit schizophrenic about this," he says. "On the one hand, you can't fail to see that governments need to do an enormous amount more. On the other, you have to appreciate that the changes can only be slow and incremental. The only thing that will make people change their minds is a catastrophe." We are not sure yet whether this is where we are heading, but it cannot be ruled out.

Nicholas Schoon



Heads in the clouds

Tom Wilkie examines the scientific explanations for why the planet is getting warmer

The hole in the Antarctic ozone layer might have gone undetected - were it not for the Falklands War. The British Antarctic Survey (BAS) had been short of money and considered stopping ozone-measuring. After the Falklands War, Mrs Thatcher channelled more money to the BAS for reasons of political prestige in the South Atlantic. Measuring ozone was resumed. It was measurements by this programme in 1985 that helped to confirm earlier suggestions by a Japanese researcher (which had been roundly dismissed) that the ozone layer was being depleted.

The materials responsible for ozone depletion - the chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) used in refrigerators and air-conditioning units, and as propellants in aerosols - are potent greenhouse chemicals. Molecule for molecule, CFCs are far more efficient as a warming blanket than carbon dioxide. However, there is far less of the stuff in the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide is the main greenhouse gas.

There is a further link. Global warming could increase the rate at which the remaining CFCs deplete ozone, according to Professor Sherwood Rowland from the University of California.

Professor Rowland and Dr Mario Molina shared the Nobel Prize in Chemistry last year for predicting, more than a decade before the hole in the Antarctic ozone layer was discovered, that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) could damage the ozone layer.

Professor Rowland believes that over the next 50 years, the ozone layer will recover as a result of the decreasing concentrations of CFCs. But it could be a close-run thing.

Professor Rowland said: "The worry about low ozone in the next couple of decades is the possibility of volcanic eruptions putting surfaces in there for chlorine to take out ozone more efficiently."

Volcanoes can increase ozone depletion by throwing huge quantities of sulphur dioxide gas into the stratosphere, where it forms sulphuric acid aerosol droplets. These provide reactive surfaces to increase the efficiency with which chlorine from CFCs reacts with and removes the ozone.

The effect of sunlight on the chemistry of aerosols on the surfaces of ice crystals in stratospheric clouds may appear innocuous: it is relatively straightforward compared to modelling the effects of carbon dioxide on climate.

One complication: pollution

from burning fossil fuels is cooling large areas of the planet's surface as well as warming it. Emissions of carbon dioxide trap heat in the atmosphere, but sulphate aerosols, also produced by burning coal and gas, act as a heat shield.

Powerful computers are the chief scientific weapon against global warming. Scientists at the Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction at Bracknell, Berkshire, are using a Cray C90 computer to calculate how the climate evolved from 1860 to the present day. Once they can recreate the past, the modellers will have more confidence in predicting a future in which concentrations of greenhouse gases continue to rise as the world burns more coal, oil and gas.

The behaviour of the oceans and the atmosphere are critical. There are complex flows of energy and water going on between the two, with the oceans slowing warming or cooling trends in the air.

Then there is the cooling

'Over the next 50 years, the ozone layer will recover... But it will be a close-run thing'

effect of aerosols. These are microscopic particles of sulphate, dust and water produced by the burning of fossil fuels as well as nature - volcanoes, sea spray and forest fires. They appear as a haze in the lower atmosphere.

Sulphate aerosols cool by reflecting incoming sunlight back into space. They are also "seed" clouds and boost the number of water droplets they contain. The clouds are then whiter and brighter and so reflect more incoming sunshine back to space.

Clouds, which could have a critical influence on the progress of any man-made global warming, are just as confusing. A warmer atmosphere would probably contain more water vapour - itself a greenhouse gas - causing further warming. But more vapour could mean more clouds. They trap some of the Earth's outgoing heat radiation, but they also reflect incoming sunlight, preventing solar radiation from heating the lower atmosphere and ground. In a warming world, our scientists will need to have their heads in the clouds.

OUR SCORCHED EARTH

Read the final two instalments of our series in Section Two next week

MONDAY

There are very few aspects of our daily lives that won't be touched by the effects of climatic change in the next century. In the second part of our series on the effects of global warming, we investigate the areas most in danger from a peril of man's making

TUESDAY

Where does the planet go from here? In the final part of our investigation into climatic change, we search for answers to a global problem

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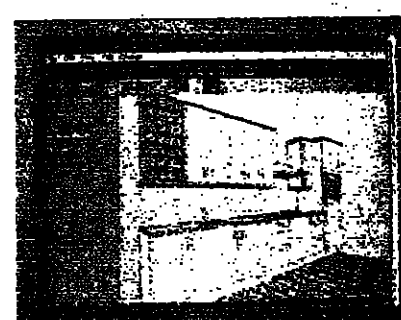
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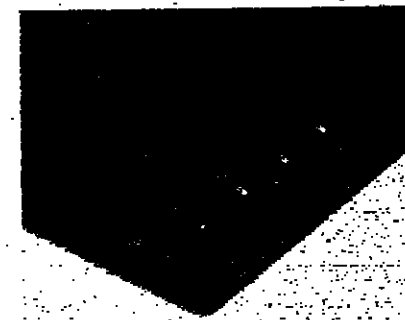
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